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H.339

Introduced by Representatives Dickinson of St. Albans Town, Beyor of Highgate, Colburn of Burlington, Gamache of Swanton, Joseph of North Hero, Keenan of St. Albans City, LaLonde of South Burlington, Murphy of Fairfax, Parent of St. Albans Town, Pearce of Richford, Rachelson of Burlington, Rosenquist of Georgia, Savage of Swanton, Viens of Newport City, Weed of Enosburgh, and Willhoit of St. Johnsbury

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Judiciary; Family Division; mediation proceedings; assistant judges

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to authorize assistant judges to serve as mediators in the Family Division of the Superior Court for proceedings involving determinations of parental rights and responsibilities and parent-child contact.

An act relating to authorizing assistant judges to serve as mediators in certain family proceedings

1 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

2 Sec. 1. 4 V.S.A. § 457a is added to read:

3 § 457a. MEDIATION IN PARENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITY

4 AND PARENT-CHILD CONTACT PROCEEDINGS;

5 JURISDICTION OF ASSISTANT JUDGES

6 (a) Subject to the limits of this section and notwithstanding any provision  
7 of law to the contrary, an assistant judge sitting alone shall have the same  
8 jurisdiction, powers, and duties to serve as a mediator in the Family Division  
9 for proceedings involving determinations of parental rights and responsibilities  
10 and parent-child contact as a mediator has in the Vermont Superior Court  
11 Family Mediation Program.

12 (b)(1) An assistant judge who elects to serve as a mediator pursuant to this  
13 section shall:

14 (A) have successfully completed at least 80 hours of training  
15 approved by the Court Administrator; and

16 (C) complete 24 hours of continuing education every two years  
17 supervised by the Court Administrator.

18 (2) The training and education required by this subsection shall be  
19 developed by the Court Administrator in consultation with the Association of  
20 Assistant Judges.

1        (c) The Administrative Judge may assign or direct assignment of an  
2        assistant judge with his or her consent to serve as a mediator within the county  
3        in which the assistant judge presides or in a county other than the county in  
4        which the assistant judge presides if the assistant judge has elected to serve as  
5        a mediator pursuant to this section.

6        Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

7        This act shall take effect on July 1, 2017.